CHRISTIAN NEWS FROM ISRAEL

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This Bulletin provides information on the Christian Communities in Israel. It contains a chronicle of Christian events, contributed by representatives of the Churches concerned, and information regarding the Government's policy towards its Christian citizens. It also contains items of documentary interest.

CONTENTS

EASTER 1951 IN ISRAEL

CHRONICLE OF EVENTS : JANUARY — MARCH

Visitors

Pilgrimages

Greek Orthodox Christmas Celebrations

Arab "High Custos" of the Christian Holy Places in the Old City

Armenian Christmas Celebrations

Representatives of the Lutheran World Federation received by Prime Minister

Arab Evangelical Episcopal Community *not* leaving Israel

Greek Orthodox Celebration in honour of St. Simeon

Y.M.C.A. Buildings in Jerusalem

Maronite Bishop feted in Northern Galilee

15th Centenary of the Death of the Armenian Saint and Hero Vardan Mamigonian

THE EVANGELICAL EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY IN ISRAEL
(By Rev. Khalil S.S. Jamal)

MEMBERSHIP OF THE VARIOUS RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES
(By Prof. E. Vitta)

EASTER 1951 IN ISRAEL

Easter celebrations in Israel saw this year the revival of an ancient Christian ceremony and a considerable increase in the numbers of Christian pilgrims from abroad. While last March hardly a hundred pilgrims entered the country, this year more than 300 visited Israel and Jerusalem in the course of the same month.

The most solemn ceremonies during Holy Week and Easter were celebrated, as usual, in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City; and the Israel authorities permitted about a thousand Christians to cross from Israel to Jordan-held territory. Special arrangements were made for this purpose and there were days before Easter when as many as 400 persons crossed the frontier. Ceremonies were held at the same time in Christian churches throughout Israel. On Palm Sunday, palm branches were blessed and distributed in Jerusalem and elsewhere. On Holy Thursday, the Franciscan Community of Jerusalem, led by the Most Reverend Father Custos, crossed from St. Saviour's for their traditional pilgrimage to the Cenacle. Early Easter Sunday morning, the French, Italian, Belgian and Spanish Consuls General, accompanied by members of their staffs, crossed in full regalia to the Old City along the traditional route via Jaffa Gate, which was specially opened for the occasion. The most notable feature, however, of this year's Easter celebrations was the Midnight Vigil Ceremony, which from now on may become a regular ceremony, to be held on Saturday night (and not as hitherto on Saturday morning), in accordance with early Christian custom.

The ceremony was this year performed only at the churches of the Dormition and the Annunciation, and at Acre, as there had been some delay in the receipt from Rome of the books of the new ritual by the local Church authorities. The Abbey church on Mt. Zion was dark and silent when the small congregation, which had climbed the steep hill under a heavy downpour, gathered by 11 p.m. in front of the church portal. Suddenly, the Prior appeared, rubbing two twigs one against the other. When the flame sprang, he blessed it and lit from it the paschal candle. This was then carried into the church by a deacon, who lit from it all the candles of the church, and finally placed it in a large candlestick near the main altar. Soon afterwards the church resounded with the chants and sacred hymns of the solemn Midnight Mass, which was celebrated by the Very Reverend Father Leo Rudloff O.S.B., Prior of the Dormition and Apostolic Administrator of Mt. Zion.

On Easter Sunday and Monday, High Mass was again celebrated at the Abbey and vespers were sung. To facilitate attendance at the ceremonies, the Israel authorities waived the regulation providing that access to the Abbey area (which lies in the military frontier zone) is by special pass only.

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The main Protestant Easter celebrations in Jewish Jerusalem were held in the Y.M.C.A. building and in the Scottish Memorial Church of St. Andrew's.

On Palm Sunday morning a Fellowship service was held at the Y.M.C.A. and a recorded performance of Bach's Missa in B Minor was given in the evening.

Throughout Holy Week, United Protestant Evangelical services were held in St. Andrew's Church at 6 p.m. each evening, and conducted in turn by the various Protestant clergymen residing in the city.

A particular feature of Jerusalem Easter celebrations is the Easter Sunrise Service celebrated each year at 5.30 a.m. on the terrace of the Scottish church, overlooking the walls of the Old City. This year, owing to heavy rain, the service had to be held indoors, to the disappointment of the congregation and especially of the 47 ministers and lay preachers who had come from the United States and Canada. The Rev. A. Scott Morrison gave the invocation and the Rev. A. Schneider, a Jewish Christian member of the visiting party, delivered the concluding prayer. The service was recorded and later, in the afternoon, broadcast by the "Voice of Israel".

On Sunday evening, a further United Evangelical service, conducted by some of the American-Canadian visitors, took place at the Y.M.C.A. The guests were introduced by the Rev. *W.L. Hull* of the Zion Christian Mission, and the service was led by the Rev. *Harold W. Gretzinger* (United States), who had brought the party to Israel. Several speakers, who had already visited the country in the course of the last eight days, spoke of their impressions.

On the same day, at noon, a special service was held in St. Andrew's Church, on the occasion of the unveiling of a plaque in memory of Captain Alistair Hamilton, Captain Mungo Sterling, and the other members of the Scottish Highland Black Watch Regiment, who had at one time served in Palestine and fallen in the Second World War. The plaque was unveiled by Mother Martha of the Bethany Convent, an aunt of the late Captain Sterling, in the presence of Mrs. Sybil Hamilton, mother of the late Captain Hamilton, and a descendant of the famous Anglo-Jewish philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore. The dedication service was attended by representatives of the Government, the British Consul General and a number of Jewish guests, and was conducted by the Rev. A. Scott Morrison, assisted by Col. Clark.

PART I: CHRONICLE OF EVENTS

JANUARY — MARCH

VISITORS

On January 8th, His Beatitude Mgr. *Alberto Gori,* Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, crossed to Israel to inspect the patriarchal institution at Rafat. On January 15th and 16th, he visited the parishes of Jaffa, Haifa and Nazareth. His Beatitude paid further visits on February 5th and on February 14th. During his visits, he called at the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

On January 22nd, His Grace Amba *Jacobus,* Coptic Archbishop of Jerusalem, crossed the lines at the Mandelbaum Gate. Accompanied by the Rev. Father *Yowakim el-Antouni,* His Grace visited the Coptic communities and institutions in Jaffa, Haifa and Nazareth.

On January 24th, Mgr. *Yeghishe Derderian,* Locum Tenens of the Armenian Patriarch, crossed the lines for a visit to Israel.

On January 26th, His Paternity, the Most Reverend Father *Giacinto Faccio,* O.F.M., Custos of the Holy Land, entered Israel for a visit to the Franciscan institutions. On January 31st he presided in Nazareth at a Congress of Catholic Parish Priests and on February 1st at a Congress of Catholic Directors of Schools in Israel. On February 4th he celebrated a solemn pontifical mass at the Basilica of the Annunciation in honour of the proclamation of the Dogma of the Assumption.

On January 27th, Mr. *Evelyn Waugh,* the well known English author, and Mr. *Christopher Sykes* arrived on a two days' visit to Israel. While in Jerusalem they met unofficially Government representatives with whom they discussed the problems of Jerusalem and the Holy Places. Mr. Waugh evinced much interest in the manner in which the new immigrants are being absorbed within the framework of statehood, and Mr. Sykes conducted some research into British-Jewish relations regarding Zionism before the Balfour Declaration.

On February 15th, the Right Reverend *H. Stewart,* Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, arrived in Israel on a week's visit. While in Jerusalem, he met representatives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

On February 23rd, Mgr. *Thomas McMahon,* President of the Pontifical Mission "pro-Palestina", arrived on a short visit to Israel. Mgr. McMahon had recently been in Washington, where he took part in a meeting of the American bishops. In Rome, he had been received by the Pope who highly commended his efforts in favour of the Arab refugees. Mgr. McMahon is now assisted in his work by Mgr. *Joseph F. Connolly,* Vice President of the Pontifical Mission.

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In the course of the first three months of 1951, the following Christian newspaper and cameramen visited the country:

January 4th:—Messers *Sadlow* and *Smith,* film cameramen repre-

senting the "International Film Service". They took coloured pictures of the ancient scrolls and jars found in the Jericho cave, now in the possession of Prof. Sukenik.

January 5th:—Mr. *George Karageorges,* of the Athens paper: "Ethnos".

January 28th-February 2nd: — Mr. *Serge Groussard,* French writer and representative of "Le Figaro Littéraire", "Le Monde" and "La Revue de Paris".

March 1st: — Messers *Carl Von Schultz* and *Leo Matiskainen* from Finland.

March 7-27th:— Mr. *Dunoyer de Segonzac* and Mme. *Chandet,* photographers of the "Paris-Match".

March 13th-21th: — Mr. *James Huizinga,* representing the "Manchester Guardian", (U.K.), the "Reporter", (U.S.A.), the "Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant" (Holland), "Aftenposten" (Norway), "Neue Zueriche Zeitung" (Switzerland), "Allgemeine Frankfurter Zeitung" (Germany).

March 11th-12th: — Miss *Barbara Toy,* Australian playwright and feature writer.

March 11th-18th: — Mr. *Tibor Mende,* representing "France-Soir" and other French, English and American papers. Mr. Mende came here on behalf of the U.N. Publications Dept. to visit the U.N. schools in the Arab refugee camps.

PILGRIMAGES

In the course of the first three months of 1951, the following groups of pilgrims entered Israel:

January 9th:—a party of 20, mainly South American priests.

January 21st:— a party of 13, including 11 Protestant clergymen from U.S.A.. This was the first organized group of Protestant pilgrims.

March 18th:—a party of 12, including ten Roman Catholic priests from Canada, Switzerland, Brazil and Italy.

March 21st:—a party of 256, mainly French, who arrived on the "S.S. Champollion". They landed in Haifa and stayed in the country two days.

March 22nd:—a party of 12 from Assisi, Italy.

March 26th:—four parties of 40, 12, 22, and 42 respectively. Most of these pilgrims were French, Canadian and American.

GREEK-ORTHODOX CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

The Greek-Orthodox Community of Israel celebrated Christmas on January 7th. Solemn services were held in Jerusalem, Ramleh, Jaffa, Haifa, Nazareth and in the villages of Galilee. Particularly noteworthy were the services held in Jerusalem, on January 7th and 8th in the

Russian Orthodox church, where Bishop Vladimir officiated. The service of January 8th. was attended by a number of invited guests, including Government and Municipal representatives.

A considerable number of Orthodox (Arab, Greek, Abyssinian and Russian), both priests and laymen, were permitted to cross the military lines to attend Mass in Bethlehem.

AN ARAB "HIGH CUSTOS" OF THE CHRISTIAN HOLY PLACES IN THE OLD CITY.

On January 15th, in execution of a decree by H.M. *King Abdullah* of Jordan, issued on January 5th, 1951, *Ragheb Pasha Nashashibi* who had been Mayor of Jerusalem from 1920 to 1935, and 'Wali" of the Old City in 1949-50, was invested with the functions of "Superintendent" (Nazer) of the Haram and High Custos (Hares Sami) of the Holy Places." At Rawda, the seat of the administrative services of the Old City, the Chief of the Jordan Royal Cabinet, in the presence of the Minister for the Interior, the Chief of Protocol and some 400 guests invited by the Governor of Jerusalem, read the decree of investiture by which the new dignitary was entrusted with the guardianship of the mosques of the Haram and of the Holy Places, to be exercised in keeping with the rules of the "status quo". After paying his homage to the King, Ragheb Pasha declared that all Communities would be treated by him according to the recognized rights, in a spirit of perfect equality. The following morning, the "Superintendent and High Custos" officially visited the Haram, the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and, in Bethlehem, the Basilica of the Nativity. (From the "Moniteur Diocésain" of the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, March 1951).

According to the Custodial periodical "Tierra Santa", no representatives of the Catholic Powers (France, Italy, Spain and Belgium) attended the morning ceremony. Commenting on their absence, the Arab weekly "As-Sarih", published in the Old City, said: "The political effect of this appointment as it recently manifested itself at the U.N. and in the various foreign capitals, has dispersed every hope of internationalization as well as the political aim which was hidden in the project of internationalization. There is nothing new in this appointment which might justify the absence of the representatives of France, Belgium, and Italy; and we realize quite clearly their intentions, which we would proclaim in the face of the world had we freedom to speak. The only significance of this appointment is an affirmation of our possession of the Holy City and the will that it should remain Arab; for which purpose it will always count upon the protection of our Army".(*)

(*) As this bulletin was going to press, news reached us from the Old City of the death of Ragheb Pasha Nashashibi. He will be succeeded by Dr. *Hussein Fakhri el-Khalidi,* former Mayor of Jerusalem and Secretary-General of the Arab Higher Executive.

ARMENIAN CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

On January 18th, 1951, on the occasion of the Armenian Christmas, more than 100 Armenians were granted permission to pass through the Mandelbaum gate to attend Christmas celebrations at Bethlehem.

On Christmas morning, January 19th, High Mass was celebrated in the Armenian church of St. Nigoghos at Jaffa by the Armenian Senior Vicar, Rev. Archimandrite Panken Abadian, and also at the Armenian church in Haifa by Rev. Archimandrite Drtad Berberian, Armenian Vicar of Haifa and the Northern Districts.

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION RECEIVED BY THE PRIME MINISTER.

On January 22nd, Dr. *Albert Fry* and Mr. *Albert Crews,* representing the Lutheran World Federation, crossed the lines from the Old City to Israel for a 48 hours' visit. Their visit was part of a world tour they undertook in order to interview heads of governments on the question of world peace and relief for refugees. Prior to coming here, they recorded messages spoken by the President of Southern Korea, and the heads of the states of Burma, India and Jordan. From Israel, they proceeded to Athens where they were to record a message from the King of Greece.

Mr. Ben Gurion, Prime Minister of Israel, received them in his office and gave them the following message:

"I feel privileged to join my voice to those of the leaders of world opinion who through this means have broadcast their appeal to mankind to salvage the foundations of international cooperation and universal peace. The harnessing of the forces of nature seems almost within our grasp, science in all its forms is on the eve of what promises to be a decisive era in its development, the problem of man's search for daily bread is rapidly attaining solution, and age-old strivings for social justice approach their ultimate fulfilment. Indeed, the broad uplands of human destiny rise imminent before us. Yet, the constructive human impulse is in danger of inner corrosion, while remorseless death summons history to its final agony.

At this decisive turning point, my people has regained its native soil, its body and spirit released from the ghetto of exile to rebuild its nationhood. The testament of exile, left us by the Lawgiver thousands of years ago, embodies the history of our spiritual and physical homelessness for nearly 20 centuries. "Thy life shall be suspended before thee, thou shalt fear night and day, thou shalt have no belief in thine own life from the fear of thy heart which thou shalt fear and from the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see" (Deut. XXVIII, 66, 67). But now, the consolation of immortal prophecy is likewise being fulfilled, even as foretold by our prophet Isaiah: "From the east shall I bring thy seed and from the west I shall gather thee in. I shall say to the north, give unto me, and to the

south, imprison not. Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth." (Isaiah XLIII, 5, 6).

The invincibility of the spirit as against material force stands vindicated; the freedom from Egyptian bondage which fixed our national character on the scene of history recurs in modern terms, yet with a vital and perennial sense of historical continuity. Inspired with the triumph of eternal belief, the remnants, restored to their homeland, redeem for themselves and for mankind the experience of their inner national essence which has survived inviolate through the vicissitudes of the times.

Our joy is cut short by the threat of universal disaster. We give our opinion in this matter with modesty in view of the paucity of our numbers. Yet the title-deeds of our renewed spiritual and national life are a reminder to all that hope and faith must not perish and that there is a reward for indestructible belief in the truth of human values. Wars poison and retard progress: they confuse and deepen the very causes for which they are fought. We see in the mad rush for rearmament a psychological cataclysm rather than the end of all hope for peace. We appeal for the maintenance of the integrity and authority of the United Nations Organization whose very existence is the decisive rampart of peace. The genius of human survival must rise supreme above ingrained enmities, national rivalries and traditional misunderstandings. No avenue must remain unexplored, no stone be left unturned. National pride and ideological pressures must be restrained and the friendship and interest of the common man in all countries must assert themselves. "The small still voice of peace" must be heard above the din of war preparations. To this cause, paramount and overriding all else, my Government and people pledge our adherence to the utmost limit.

In this connection the efforts of social and humanitarian organizations in alleviating human misery wherever it be are to be welcomed and encouraged as removing a source of world tension."

ARAB EVANGELICAL EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY NOT LEAVING ISRAEL

In connection with the rumour which has been circulating at Nazareth and in other places and which even has obtained some publicity in the press, that the (Arab) Evangelical Episcopal Community in Israel (see page 14) was considering emigrating to Brazil, the Reverend *Khalil S.S. Jamal,* Secretary to the Council of the Evangelical Episcopal Community, has informed the Editor of this Bulletin that there was no truth whatsoever in the above mentioned rumour. "The Standing Committee of the Council of the Evangelical Episcopal Community in Israel (which is the Council's executive body) has *not* considered such a proposal nor will it consider it for any reason whatsoever", he writes.

GREEK ORTHODOX CELEBRATION IN HONOUR OF ST. SIMEON

On February 16th, the commemoration of the death of Holy Simeon took place at the old Greek Orthodox Convent of St. Simeon in Jerusalem, the supposed burial place of the "Man who awaited the consolation of Israel" and to whom it was revealed that "he would not see death before having seen the Anointed of God" (Luke, 2, 25-35).

The ceremony was performed by His Grace Mgr. *Epiphanios,* Archbishop of Philadelphia, assisted by two archimandrites and two deacons, who came for this occasion from the Old City. Archbishop *Vladimir,* Head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission, was present.

After the ceremony, the Rev. Archimandrite *Philoumenos,* Superior of the Monastery, gave a reception in honour of his guests.

This was the first solemn function in the convent since the outbreak of the 1948 hostilities. Having at that time been occupied by Iraki troops and subsequently reconquered by the Hagana forces, the place had suffered considerable damage and was only recently restored to normal functioning.

Y.M.C.A. BUILDINGS IN JERUSALEM NOT FOR SALE

Reports of the impending sale of the Y.M.C.A. buildings in Jerusalem have been denied by Mr. *J. Leslie Putnam,* the Organization's Secretary-General.

The Y.M.C.A. International Committee in New-York has reaffirmed its past decision to continue to work in Jerusalem, said Mr. Putnam, reporting that the membership has been growing steadily, from about 150 a year ago to the present 1,100. More than 90 per cent of the membership is Jewish.

The chief difficulty, he added, was to arrange a programme to permit all the various local sports organizations to make equal use of the limited facilities available.

He pointed out that the demand for the facilities exceeded the capacity of the field, gymnasium and auditorium.

"Our aim remains the same as it was in 1935 when we opened our doors and that is to provide a meeting place for all peoples".

MARONITE BISHOP FETED IN NORTHERN GALILEE

On March 4th, the village of Jish in Northern Galilee (the ancient Gush-Halav) was the scene of much festivity on the occasion of a visit by Mgr. *Antoine Khoreish,* who had recently been appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Maronite diocese of Tyre and Sidon.

From the early hours of the morning, the houses of Jish were decorated with flags and foliage, while numerous guests (Jewish, Christian and Moslem) began to arrive from the villages of Galilee and even from Haifa and other parts of the country. Mass had to be celebrated in the

Greek Catholic church, as the local Maronite church was too small to contain the large number of guests.

The religious ceremony was followed by a generous banquet offered by the Maronite Community of Jish in honour of their Bishop. The guests—more than a hundred—included Government officials, religious leaders (among them the Rabbi of Safad), Army officers, Jewish, Arab and Circassian notables.

In his reply to the speeches of the heads of the villages, Dr. Colbi of the Ministry of Religious Affairs stressed the ancient bonds of friendship and esteem which existed between the Jewish and Maronite peoples. Other speakers recalled instances of mutual help and collaboration between Jews and Maronites in times of war and calamities and expressed the hope that those good relations would soon be renewed and strengthened. The meeting was concluded by an inspiring address by Mgr. Khoreish, in the course of which he recalled the noble and firm stand of the Maronite Patriarch against the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

COMMEMORATION OF THE 15TH CENTENARY OF THE DEATH OF ST. VARDAN

This year, the Armenian Church all over the world is celebrating the 15th centenary of the death of St. Vardan, Armenian national hero, who died in a battle against the Zoroastrian Persians in defence of the Christian faith. On March 8th, solemn services were celebrated in the Armenian churches at Jaffa and Haifa and in the evening a performance illustrating the life of the saint was given by the dramatic group of the Armenian Young Men's Society at their club in Haifa. After the performance, the Rev. Archimandrite *Papken Abadian,* Senior Vicar of the Armenian Church in Israel, spoke to the audience on the significance of the battle and its effects on Armenian history.

In the course of his address, he said: "The middle of the 5th century was a crucial period in the destinies of the Armenian nation and of Eastern Christendom in general. Armenia, which had been the first state in the world to adopt Christianity, was at that time no longer an independent country. It was divided between the Greek and Persian Empires. The "King of Kings", who was bent upon the destruction of Armenian nationhood, decided to introduce Mazdaism in Persarmenia and forcibly to convert its people. A number of Armenian princes and satraps, more or less sincerely, sided with their suzerain. But the Armenian people remained loyal to the faith and tradition of their fathers and revolted against the enemy. The moving spirit of this revolt was Vardan Mamigonian who, in spite of treachery and defeatism, led his nation against overwhelming odds. St. Vardan fell in 451, in the battle of Avaraïr, and with him fell seven other generals and more than a thousand of his most faithful followers. The march of Mazdaism, however, was arrested. The example of this saint and hero remained like a beacon and a burning flame in the long night of our nation's struggle for the integrity of its soul and Church".

PART II

THE EVANGELICAL EPISCOPAL COMMUNITY IN ISRAEL

(By Rev. Khalil Samy Shukry Jamal B.A., Secretary of the Council)

The Arabic-speaking branch of the Anglican Communion in what was called "Palestine" is known by the name of the Evangelical Episcopal Community. This community is largely the result of the missionary labours of the late Bishop *Samuel Gobat* (Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem from 1846 to 1879). After having founded a number of congregations, Bishop Gobat handed them over to the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) which attended to their spiritual welfare and afforded them pastoral care. In 1905, the C.M.S. decided to weld these scattered congregations into one Community. For this purpose it founded for them a Church Council (known for many years as the Palestine Native Church Council) which was to control the administrative and pastoral affairs of the Community as its supreme authority, but which left the spiritual prerogatives of the Bishop intact. Three aims were formulated for the Council, namely: (a) self-support, (b) self-government, (c) self-extension. A protocol was signed by the P.N.C.C. and the C.M.S. to the effect that the C.M.S. would afford the Council an annually diminishing grant-in-aid and that the C.M.S. control over the affairs of the Council was to diminish in direct proportion to this diminution.

At the beginning, the C.M.S. supplied the full budget of the Council and thus had almost total control; towards the end of the British Mandate this grant was just a few hundred pounds and the C.M.S. had the right to send "visitors" to attend the meeting of the Council and its Standing Committee, but without the right to vote.

During the troubles and the Palestine war, the large bulk of the members of the Evangelical Episcopal Community left the country. This was their only effective way of expressing their disapproval of the fighting without subjecting themselves to terrorism from certain sections of the Palestinian Arab community, Hence, when the fighting ended, it transpired that the majority of the once flourishing parishes of the Community, situated in territory which became Israel, had become sadly depleted in numbers. Below is a table of approximate numbers of people in the various parishes situated on what is now Israeli territory before and after the end of the British Mandate.

Parish	Before May 15, 1948	After May 15, 1948
Acre	150	25
Beisan	35	nil
Haifa	1200	190
Jaffa	450	40
Jerusalem	850	15
Kefr Yassif	300	100
Nazareth	300	300
Ramleh	160	45
Er-Rayna (near Nazareth)	65	65
Shefa Amr	150	110
Total	3460	890

Of five clergymen who held cures of souls in this area only three have remained at their posts, namely, the Rev. *Musa Azar* of Ramleh (formerly of Shefa Amr) the Rev. *Rafiq Farah* of Haifa, and the Rev. *Khalil Jamal* of Nazareth.

At first, the Community had inevitably to experience a certain amount of confusion and disorganization; but as soon as its clergy and leading laymen were able to travel about and establish contacts with the various stations belonging to the Community, the sense of stupor and prostration was quickly shaken off and efforts to resume normal activity were commenced. A preliminary "Conference" was held at Haifa on 21th February 1949 with a two-fold purpose: (a) to reorganize the finances of the Community so that it could continue its work in a stable manner, and, (b) to probe the possibilities of returning to normal organized life and functions. These possibilities were so manifest that the Rev. *Khalil Jamal,* as secretary of the Council before the break-up in Palestine, was advised to summon a regular constitutional Council to meet at Haifa on June 6th, 1949.

This Council took upon itself the full functions and authority of the P.N.C.C. This was a perfectly constitutional act, as by the Regulations of the Council adopted in 1905 the Council is made up of delegates elected by the Pastorate Committees of the individual congregations, and these committees are never allowed to lapse. As soon as a seat in any committee falls vacant a new member is at once elected to fill the vacancy. Hence the Pastorate Committee of parishes in Israel could by the 1905 Regulations form a Council. Indeed, these Regulations made it incumbent upon them to do so. The Council elected by secret ballot an Executive Committee comprising:

Chairman — Mr. *Nicola Saba* (of Jaffa)
Secretary — Rev. *Khalil Jamal* (of Nazareth)
Treasurer — Mr. *Girius Khoury* (of Haifa)
Member — Rev. *Musa Azar* (then of Shefa Amr)

Among the major questions considered by this Council were the amendment of the 1905 Regulations into a Constitution to meet present conditions and needs, and the securing of the recognition of the Community by Government under the Religious Communities Ordinance of 1926. Accordingly, a special Regulations' Committee was entrusted with the task of drafting an Ordinance to be presented to Government as an instrument for securing its recognition of the Community, and also to draft amendments to the 1905 Regulations. When this task was accomplished, an extraordinary council was summoned to meet at Haifa on March 9th 1950, for the sole purpose of considering these drafts together with the comments made on them by the various congregations affiliated to the Community. This Council passed the draft Ordinance and amended Regulations. According to the 1905 Regulations, any amendment to these Regulations had to be passed by two councils before

it became operative. Thus when the Council held its annual meeting (at Nazareth) during the week beginning April 30th 1950, it heard the second reading of these two drafts and unanimously passed them in votes of degrees (i.e. the clergy and laity voted as separate bodies). In this way, the amended Regulations became operative as the Constitution for 1950 and are binding on the Council and on all its congregations. The next step before the Council is to secure the recognition of the Community by Government and have its name listed in the Schedule of Religious Communities recognized in Israel. It is hoped that this recognition will soon be secured. These hopes are strengthened by the fact that during the Ottoman regime, a Royal Firman was issued recognising the "The Protestant Ottoman Community" and dividing the Protestants into two sections: Presbyterian and Episcopalian.

Of the ten stations listed above, all (with the exception of Beisan) are still in existence. According to the Regulations of the Council, each congregation must elect a "Pastorate Committee" to control its affairs, administer its properties and finances and assist the pastor in his pastoral duties. Certain regulations govern the procedure of elections and the compiling of electoral lists and electoral candidates. Elections are always by secret ballot. The Pastorate Committees in their turn appoint delegates from their number or from their parish to the Council, which is the supreme body for controlling the temporal and administrative affairs of the Community. Each Pastorate Committee is headed by the local pastor, who is ex-officio Chairman. The Pastorate Committee may appoint or depose any number of local branch committees and sub-committees and is responsible for co-ordinating and controlling their work. Once more the pastor is ex-officio Chairman of all these committees.

Of the congregations affiliated to the Council, two maintain parish schools. Christ Church Parish at Nazareth maintains a school for boys and girls, which is probably the oldest in the country, as it was founded by the C.M.S. in 1851. It ended its school year last July with 210 students in classes ranging from Kindergarten to a Preparatory class. St. Paul's Parish at Shefa Amr controls the other school, which is for girls. It ended its school year with 130 students in classes ranging from Kindergarten to 4th Primary. This school has received some financial aid from the Ministry of Education. The Parish of St. John the Evangelist at Haifa is now making plans to re-open the once flourishing school which it possessed up to the end of the British Mandate in Palestine.

The Evangelical Episcopal Community, like many others, had to sustain material loss through damage to property during the fighting. In Jerusalem, St. Paul's Church (and nearly all the other properties of the community) was very badly damaged. This was inevitable, as all these properties are situated in the area where heavy fighting must have taken place. The brand-new church at Acre was completely looted, and

although it is now once more in commission, some of its furniture is still at large. The church at Beisan was also looted; as the population of this city was evacuated by order, this church is no longer in commission. Emmanuel School at Ramleh and some other buildings at Jerusalem are now in the hands of the Custodian of Absentees' Property. Efforts are now being made to have these buildings released from the Custodian and also to secure compensation for damages sustained or property looted. Indications point to a great probability that this will be achieved, as the Ministry of Religious Affairs has throughout been most sympathetic and co-operative. With its help, much can and will be done.

In conclusion, it is only right to state that although the Community has had to suffer many severe trials, these trials have not always been wilfully inflicted by the authorities, as some would wish to believe. Things like this are bound to happen anywhere when man chooses to settle differences by war instead of by common-sense and friendly negotiations.

On the other hand, we cannot but be grateful that these trials sustained have often been a source of great blessing to the Community as a whole, to its scattered congregations, and to its individual members. The lesson learned was that tribulations bring out the true value and qualities of the Christian faith in a way which ease and confort seldom succeed in achieving. This lesson has made our people more earnest in their devotion, more certain of their divine calling, and closer to their Master who chose for Himself and for them the glorious Way of the Cross.

PART III

MEMBERSHIP OF THE VARIOUS RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

(By Prof. E. Vitta)

In order to dispel misapprehensions and to satisfy the interest aroused in many minds as to the meaning of the term "a person belonging to a religious Community", we give here an article specially written for this paper by Prof. *E. Vitta,* author of "Personal Status in Palestine", at present Assistant Director of Legal Planning, Ministry of Justice.

Under the law at present in force in the State of Israel, which derives from the legal situation in Mandatory times, the religion or religious Community of a person has important consequences for his legal status. Membership of a Community determines not only the law applicable in matters of personal status (marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc.) but, in a number of instances, also the exclusive jurisdiction of the religious courts.

No enactment of a general character lays down how a person's membership of a religious Community is to be ascertained. The Jewish Community Rules, 1928, partly remove the uncertainties so far as membership of the Jewish Community is concerned (under rule 17 a special Register for members of that Community helps to establish whether a person is or is not technically a member of the community). But, in relation to Moslems and members of the various Christian Communities, the question remains open to doubt.

In the circumstances we are of opinion that the adherence by a person to the Moslem religion or membership in one of the religious Communities must be ascertained under the rules of Moslem law or of the religious Community concerned. In the absence of dispositions of a general character, we must hold that the legislator, when referring to a "Moslem" or to "a member of a religious Community", referred to a person having such a qualification under the sole law which could give a definition, viz. the religious law of that person.

The above view is supported by the existing enactments in succession matters. Under sec. 23 of the Succession Ordinance, the question whether a person is a member of a class or possesses a character or quality whereby he is entitled to share in a succession, must be decided on the basis of the claimant's religious law. If that section were given wider application, on the same principle of reference to religious law, it would leave to that law the answer to the question whether a person belongs to a religious Community.

The problem of a person's Community may arise in one of the following cases: (a) original membership—i.e. membership by birth—of a given religious Community; (b) person connected with two or more religious Communities; (c) change of religious Community.

In the first case, as above suggested, the law of the Community of which a person is allegedly a member must be consulted. If, according to such a law, he appears to have been received at birth into the Community, the question of his membership in the Community shall be considered as settled.

The case of a person connected with two or more Communities, each claiming that he is or is not their member, is somehow more complicated. In a case of this sort, there would be a positive or negative conflict between the two religious laws and it is not easy to give a clear cut rule to overcome the difficulty. Suppose that the question to be determined was the religious affiliation of a child of a mixed marriage, say of the son of a Christian and of a Jewess. Suppose further that, in the circumstances of that case, the Christian Community to which the father belonged considered the child as one of its members; while the law of the Jewish Community maintained that the son of a Jewish mother was to be considered as a Jew. Questions of this kind may only be answered by taking into consideration, not only the juridical elements

of the conflicting religious laws, but also the relevant factual issues. The judge would have to consider the Community to which the person concerned considered himself to belong before the proceedings, the circles in which he lived and so on; membership of a religious Community is both a question of religious belief and of social import, both to be ascertained on the basis of subjective elements.

One of the elements of fact to be considered by the judge is, of course, the declaration of the person concerned as to the Community of which he considers himself a member. But what he says must be scrutinized in the light of his active behaviour in the time preceding the suit. The possibility should also be taken into account of a declaration not made *bona fide*, but intended to invoke the law which is the more favourable in the circumstances of the case.

As to change of Community, sec.2 of the Religious Community (Change) Ordinance requires a person who has changed his Community and desires legal effect to be given to such a change, to obtain a certificate from the head of the Community which he has entered, and to notify the change to the District Commissioner of the district in which he resides. The District Commissioner registers the change and gives a copy of the registration to the applicant, to the head of the Community abandoned and to that of the Community the applicant has joined. All these formalities are always required to give legal effect to a change of Community. But, so far as minors under the age of 18 are concerned, the change does not become effective unless there is the consent of the parent or guardian.

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